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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN PLANS FOR LONDON AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCE

REF: SECSTATE 3627

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) We discussed Norway's plans for the London January 31-February 1 Afghanistan Conference with MFA Advisor Arne Floelo on January 13. Floelo said that both Foreign Minister Jonas Stoere and Development Minister Erik Solheim planned to attend the conference (back to back, not simultaneously). Floelo recalled that Norway had given a generous five-year pledge in Berlin (2004), which equals approximately USD 45 million per year (300 million NOK). The Norwegian total assistance in 2005 to Afghanistan was over USD 46 million (311 million NOK), making Afghanistan the biggest single recipient by far of Norwegian assistance, and keeping Norway on track with its Berlin pledge. Floelo did not expect that Norway would be able to increase the amount of assistance for Afghanistan within the time frame of Norway's existing pledge, 2004-2008; however, Norway wants to come to London with something new and is committed to fulfilling Afghanistan's long-term requirements for assistance. While the decision has not yet been made at the political level, Floelo told us that Norway may come to London with a promise to straight-line its current level of assistance (approximately USD 45 million a year) for an additional 3-5 years beyond the current 2008 expiry of its Berlin pledge.

2. (U) Of the overall USD 46 million of assistance from Norway to Afghanistan in 2005, approximately USD 16 million (110 million NOK) was designated as long-term development aid, of which 86 percent is channeled through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund ARTF). The proportion of long-term Norwegian assistance (as distinct from humanitarian and transitional assistance) in 2006 is set to rise to USD 22 million (150 million NOK) in 2006.

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